Egypt:

Obama Administration Commends Egypt for Orderly Transition

White House Statement, January 18, 2011[1]

The President spoke with Egyptian President Mubarak this morning on a broad range of issues, to include the New Year's Day attack on a Coptic Christian church in Alexandria, developments in Tunisia and Lebanon, and how best to advance Middle East peace. The President extended his personal condolences to President Mubarak and the Egyptian people for the heinous bombing targeting Christians that occurred on New Year's Day, and urged all sides to ease tensions and work toward improved relations among all religions. The President raised the latest developments in Tunisia, and shared with President Mubarak that the United States is calling for calm and an end to violence, and for the interim government of Tunisia to uphold universal human rights and hold free and fair elections in order to meet the aspirations of the Tunisian people. The President thanked President Mubarak for Egypt's support for Lebanese Prime Minister Hariri and the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, which is attempting to end the era of impunity for political assassination in Lebanon, and achieve justice for the Lebanese people. The President and President Mubarak also discussed ways to advance efforts on Middle East peace between the Israelis and Palestinians.

White House Statement, January 25, 2011[2]

As we monitor the situation in Egypt, we urge all parties to refrain from using violence, and expect the Egyptian authorities to respond to any protests peacefully. We support the universal rights of the Egyptian people, including the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly. The Egyptian government has an important opportunity to be responsive to the aspirations of the Egyptian people, and pursue political, economic and social reforms that can improve their lives and help Egypt prosper. The United States is committed to working with Egypt and the Egyptian people to advance these goals.

More broadly, what is happening in the region reminds us that, as the President said in Cairo, we have an unyielding belief that all people yearn for certain things: the ability to speak your mind and have a say in how you are governed; confidence in the rule of law and the equal administration of justice; government that is transparent and free of corruption; and the freedom to live as you choose—these are human rights and we support them everywhere.

Remarks by President Obama, January 28, 2011[3]

President Barack Obama delivered these remarks in Washington, DC

President Obama. Good evening, everybody. My administration has been closely monitoring the situation in Egypt, and I know that we will be learning more tomorrow when day breaks. As the situation continues to unfold, our first concern is preventing injury or loss of life. So I want to be very clear in calling upon the Egyptian authorities to refrain from any violence against peaceful protestors.

The people of Egypt have rights that are universal. That includes the right to peaceful assembly and association, the right to free speech, and the ability to determine their own destiny. These are human rights. And the United States will stand up for them everywhere.

I also call upon the Egyptian government to reverse the actions that they've taken to interfere with access to the Internet, to cell phone service and to social networks that do so much to connect people in the 21st century.

At the same time, those protesting in the streets have a responsibility to express themselves peacefully. Violence and destruction will not lead to the reforms that they seek.

Now, going forward, this moment of volatility has to be turned into a moment of promise. The United States has a close partnership with Egypt and we've cooperated on many issues, including working together to advance a more peaceful region. But we've also been clear that there must be reform—political, social, and economic reforms that meet the aspirations of the Egyptian people.

In the absence of these reforms, grievances have built up over time. When President Mubarak addressed the Egyptian people tonight, he pledged a better democracy and greater economic opportunity. I just spoke to him after his speech and I

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told him he has a responsibility to give meaning to those words, to take concrete steps and actions that deliver on that promise.

Violence will not address the grievances of the Egyptian people. And suppressing ideas never succeeds in making them go away. What's needed right now are concrete steps that advance the rights of the Egyptian people: a meaningful dialogue between the government and its citizens, and a path of political change that leads to a future of greater freedom and greater opportunity and justice for the Egyptian people.

Now, ultimately the future of Egypt will be determined by the Egyptian people. And I believe that the Egyptian people want the same things that we all want—a better life for ourselves and our children, and a government that is fair and just and responsive. Put simply, the Egyptian people want a future that befits the heirs to a great and ancient civilization.

The United States always will be a partner in pursuit of that future. And we are committed to working with the Egyptian government and the Egyptian people—all quarters—to achieve it.

Around the world governments have an obligation to respond to their citizens. That's true here in the United States; that's true in Asia; it is true in Europe; it is true in Africa; and it's certainly true in the Arab world, where a new generation of citizens has the right to be heard.

When I was in Cairo, shortly after I was elected President, I said that all governments must maintain power through consent, not coercion. That is the single standard by which the people of Egypt will achieve the future they deserve.

Surely there will be difficult days to come. But the United States will continue to stand up for the rights of the Egyptian people and work with their government in pursuit of a future that is more just, more free, and more hopeful.

Thank you very much.

White House Statement, January 30, 2011[4]

The President has made a number of calls to foreign leaders to discuss the ongoing situation in Egypt. On Saturday, January 29th, the President spoke to Prime Minister Erdogan of Turkey, Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel, and King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. Today, he spoke to Prime Minister Cameron of the United Kingdom. During his calls, the President reiterated his focus on opposing violence and calling for restraint; supporting universal rights, including the right to peaceful assembly, association, and speech; and supporting an orderly transition to a government that is responsive to the aspirations of the Egyptian people. The President asked each of the leaders that he spoke to for their assessment of the situation, and agreed to stay in close contact going forward.

Remarks by Secretary of State Clinton in an interview with David Gregory of NBC's Meet The Press, January 30, 2011[5]

Secretary Hillary Clinton delivered these remarks in Washington, DC

Q. I know our time with you is limited. Let me get right to it. On Monday, you said that the Egyptian Government was stable and was looking for ways to respond to the wishes of the people. Have you changed your view?

Secretary Clinton. David, this is a very volatile situation, and I think that as we monitor it closely we continue to urge the Egyptian Government, as the United States has for 30 years, to respond to the legitimate aspirations of the Egyptian people and begin to take concrete steps to implement democratic and economic reform. At the same time, we recognize that we have to deal with the situation as it is, and we are heartened by what we hear from our contacts that, at least thus far, the army has been trying to bring a sense of order without violence. And we have to make a distinction, as they are attempting to do, between peaceful protestors whose aspirations need to be addressed, and then those who take advantage of such a situation for looting or other criminal activity.

And we have a very clear message: Long-term stability rests on responding to the legitimate needs of the Egyptian people, and that is what we want to see happen.

Q. Are you calling the regime of Hosni Mubarak stable this morning?

Secretary Clinton. I'm not going to get into either/or choices. What we're saying is that any efforts by this government to respond to the needs of their people, to take steps that will result in a peaceful, orderly transition to a democratic regime, is what is in the best interests of everyone, including the current government.

Q. You've talked about the steps that are necessary for the regime to take in order to really respond to the wishes of the people, your spokesman, P.J. Crowley, put on Twitter yesterday that, "The Egyptian Government can't reshuffle the deck and then stand pat. President Mubarak's words pledging reform must be followed by action."

Are you calling upon Egypt to call for free and fair elections, and will you ask Mubarak to say unequivocally that he will not run?

Secretary Clinton. We have been urging free and fair election for many years. I mean, I do think it's important to recognize that through Republican and Democratic administrations alike, America's message has been consistent. We want to see free and fair elections, and we expect that that will be one of the outcomes of what is going on in Egypt right now. So we have been sending that message over and over again, publicly and privately, and we continue to do so.

Q. But is the only way that Mubarak stays in power for now is if he calls immediately for free and fair elections and pledges that he will not run?

Secretary Clinton. David, these issues are up to the Egyptian people, and they have to make these decisions. But our position is very clear. We have urged for 30 years that there be a vice president, and finally a vice president was announced

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just a day or two ago. So we have tried to, in our partnership with Egypt, to make the point over and over again about what will create a better pathway for the Egyptian people in terms of greater participation with political reforms and greater economic opportunity.

I spoke about this very clearly in Doha, it seems like a long time ago but just about two weeks ago, where I outlined that whatever was possible in the 20th century is no longer possible for regimes in the 21stcentury. The world is moving too fast. There is too much information. People's aspirations and certainly the rise of middle classes throughout the world demand responsive, participatory government. And that is what we expect to see happen.

Q. Well, I just want to pin you down on this, Secretary Clinton. Do you think that the Mubarak regime has taken the necessary steps to retain power?

Secretary Clinton. Oh, I think that there are many, many steps that have to be taken. And it's not a question of who retains power. That should not be the issue. It's how are we going to respond to the legitimate needs and grievances expressed by the Egyptian people and chart a new path. Clearly, the path that has been followed has not been one that has created that democratic future, that economic opportunity that people in the peaceful protests are seeking.

So it's our very strong advice, which we have delivered. President Obama spoke with President Mubarak, I've spoken with my counterpart, Secretary Gates has spoken with his. This is an ongoing conversation that American officials have had for 30 years. Now is the time to move toward a national dialogue, to take concrete steps, to create the political space for peaceful protest and for the creation of peaceful oppositions that want to help work toward a better future. That is what we want to see.

Q. Should Mubarak lose power? Will the United States offer him sanctuary?

Secretary Clinton. I believe strongly that we are only at the beginning of what is unfolding in Egypt. I'm not going to go into hypotheticals and speculation, other than to say that President Mubarak and his government have been an important partner to the United States. I mean, let's not just focus on today. This is a government that made and kept a peace with Israel that was incredibly important, avoiding violence, turmoil, death in the region. But so much more has to be done, and that is what we are urging.

Q. But you'd like to see him stay in power?

Secretary Clinton. David, you cannot keep trying to put words in my mouth. I've never said that. I don't intend to say that. I want the Egyptian people to have the chance to chart a new future. It needs to be an orderly, peaceful transition to real democracy, not faux democracy like the elections we saw in Iran two years ago, where you have one election 30 years ago and then the people just keep staying in power and become less and less responsive to their people. We want to see a real democracy that reflects the vibrancy of Egyptian society. And we believe that President Mubarak, his government, civil society, political activists, need to be part of a national dialogue to bring that about.

Q. Before you go, are Americans in danger in Egypt?

Secretary Clinton. We're working closely with the Egyptian Government to ensure the safety of American citizens. We have authorized a voluntary departure. We're reaching out to American citizens. As I'm speaking to you at this point, thankfully we do not have any reports of any American citizens killed or injured. We want to keep it that way. So we are just working triple-time here at the State Department to ensure the safety of our Americans.

Q. Secretary Clinton, thank you.

Secretary Clinton. Thank you.

Remarks by Secretary of State Clinton in an interview with Bob Schieffer of CBS's Face The Nation, January 30, 2011[6]

Secretary Hillary Clinton delivered these remarks in Washington, DC

Q. We're just off the line with Liz Palmer, our person in Cairo, and during her report, F-16s, Egyptian air force warplanes, apparently were flying low over the demonstrators in the main part of Cairo. Do you know what this is about?

Secretary Clinton. Bob, I don't, and let me repeat again what President Obama and I have been saying, and that is to urge the Egyptian security forces to show restraint, to not respond in any way through violence or intimidation. That falls upon the peaceful protestors who are demanding that their grievances be heard. And obviously, our reports up until now have been that the Egyptian army had taken up positions, that they were showing such restraint. And we strongly urge that that continue.

What the people who are in Tahrir Square and elsewhere in Egypt are protesting for is the right to participate in their government, to have economic opportunity, for their human rights to be respected. We are very clearly asking both in public and private that the Egyptian authorities respond to that, that they start a process of national dialogue that will lead to a transition to such democracy, and what President Mubarak himself said the other day—that they would begin to take concrete steps for democratic and economic reform—we expect to see happen.

Q. Madam Secretary, do you think those things are possible if President Mubarak stays in office, or is he eventually going to have to leave?

Secretary Clinton. I'm not going to speculate, Bob. What we are focused on now is a transition that will meet the needs of the Egyptian people and that will truly establish democracy, not just for one election and then no more elections after

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that, or not for radicals, extremists, violent elements to take over. We want to see the—what really was at the core of the protests, which were people saying, "Hey, we deserve a better life. We deserve more opportunity to be respected and responded to." And that is what we've been conveying and that's what we will continue to make very clear, and we stand ready to assist.

Q. Do you—are you concerned that if President Mubarak does go, it may give an opportunity for the Muslim Brotherhood, which has been the opposition to his government for so many years, could somehow come to power? I think most people agree they were not the start of this or the cause of these demonstrations. But where do you see—what role do you see them playing if Mr.—President Mubarak should go?

Secretary Clinton. Well, first, I'm not speculating about who goes or who stays. And I'm not prepared to comment on what kind of democratic process the Egyptian people can construct for themselves. But we obviously want to see people who are truly committed to democracy, not to imposing any ideology on Egyptians. And therefore, we would like to encourage that people who have been the voice of protest and been the voice of civil society be the ones at the table trying to design what would be an orderly transition to meet the democratic and economic needs of the people.

Bob, we're all very conscious of the fact that Egypt is an incredibly important country, a large country with great influence in the region and meaning for the Arab world. And we want to see the outcome of what started as peaceful protests legitimately demanding redress for grievances to result in a true democracy. Not a phony one like we saw with Iranian elections, not to see a small group that doesn't represent the full diversity of Egyptian society take over and try to impose their own religious or ideological beliefs. We want to see the full diversity and dynamism of Egyptian society represented.

Q. Do you believe that his appointment of a new vice president—is that helpful?

Secretary Clinton. Well, it's something that American Government representatives have been urging and requesting for 30 years. I talked—I've talked with former ambassadors over the last weeks who have said, "Boy, I remember when I went in in 1980-this or 1990-that." So yes, it's something we have said is absolutely imperative. It finally has happened. There are some new people taking responsibility in government. We hope that they can contribute to the kind of democratic and economic reforms that the people of Egypt deserve.

Q. So far, though, it does not seem that anything that Mr. Mubarak has said or done up until this point has, in any way, tempered these demonstrations. I mean, things seem to be getting worse rather than better.

Secretary Clinton. Well, I think there are several things going on. But first and foremost, words alone are not enough. There have to be actions. There has to be a demonstrable commitment to the kind of reforms that we all know are needed and desired, but also too, there is now, unfortunately, in addition to the legitimate, peaceful protests that are going on, lots of reports of looting, prison breaks, and the like. So it makes the situation much more complicated than it even was before, because everyone wants to ensure that the right of assembly, the right of association, the right of free expression be protected, that there be no violence against the protests.

At the same time, people in the streets have to refrain from violence themselves. And I've heard many stories of Egyptians protecting their national museum, protecting their homes. And they're protecting them from looters and from criminals. So this is an incredibly complex set of circumstances, and we are hoping and praying that the authorities will be able to respond to the legitimate requests for participation by the peaceful protestors. Let's begin to see some meetings with representatives of the government and representatives of civil society. Let's begin to see some steps taken that will lead toward free, fair, and credible elections in the future.

Those will begin to put some substance behind the words and give the protestors who are trying to see a future for Egypt that is responsive to their needs a reality that they can hang onto.

Q. All right. Madam Secretary, thank you so much.

Secretary Clinton. Thank you.

White House Statement, January 31, 2011[7]

This morning, the Vice President called King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa of Bahrain to discuss the ongoing situation in Egypt. During the call, the Vice President reiterated our strong focus on opposing violence and calling for restraint; supporting universal rights, including the right to peaceful assembly, association, and speech; and supporting an orderly transition to a government that is responsive to the aspirations of the Egyptian people. The Vice President and Bahraini King exchanged views of the situation and agreed to stay in close contact going forward.

Statement by President Obama, February 1, 2011[8]

President Obama. Good evening, everybody. Over the past few days, the American people have watched the situation unfolding in Egypt. We've seen enormous demonstrations by the Egyptian people. We've borne witness to the beginning of a new chapter in the history of a great country, and a long-time partner of the United States.

And my administration has been in close contact with our Egyptian counterparts and a broad range of the Egyptian people, as well as others across the region and across the globe. And throughout this period, we've stood for a set of core principles.

First, we oppose violence. And I want to commend the Egyptian military for the

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professionalism and patriotism that it has shown thus far in allowing peaceful protests while protecting the Egyptian people. We've seen tanks covered with banners, and soldiers and protesters embracing in the streets. And going forward, I urge the military to continue its efforts to help ensure that this time of change is peaceful.

Second, we stand for universal values, including the rights of the Egyptian people to freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, and the freedom to access information. Once more, we've seen the incredible potential for technology to empower citizens and the dignity of those who stand up for a better future. And going forward, the United States will continue to stand up for democracy and the universal rights that all human beings deserve, in Egypt and around the world.

Third, we have spoken out on behalf of the need for change. After his speech tonight, I spoke directly to President Mubarak. He recognizes that the status quo is not sustainable and that a change must take place. Indeed, all of us who are privileged to serve in positions of political power do so at the will of our people. Through thousands of years, Egypt has known many moments of transformation. The voices of the Egyptian people tell us that this is one of those moments; this is one of those times.

Now, it is not the role of any other country to determine Egypt's leaders. Only the Egyptian people can do that. What is clear—and what I indicated tonight to President Mubarak—is my belief that an orderly transition must be meaningful, it must be peaceful, and it must begin now.

Furthermore, the process must include a broad spectrum of Egyptian voices and opposition parties. It should lead to elections that are free and fair. And it should result in a government that's not only grounded in democratic principles, but is also responsive to the aspirations of the Egyptian people.

Throughout this process, the United States will continue to extend the hand of partnership and friendship to Egypt. And we stand ready to provide any assistance that is necessary to help the Egyptian people as they manage the aftermath of these protests.

Over the last few days, the passion and the dignity that has been demonstrated by the people of Egypt has been an inspiration to people around the world, including here in the United States, and to all those who believe in the inevitability of human freedom.

To the people of Egypt, particularly the young people of Egypt, I want to be clear: We hear your voices. I have an unyielding belief that you will determine your own destiny and seize the promise of a better future for your children and your grandchildren. And I say that as someone who is committed to a partnership between the United States and Egypt.

There will be difficult days ahead. Many questions about Egypt's future remain unanswered. But I am confident that the people of Egypt will find those answers. That truth can be seen in the sense of community in the streets. It can be seen in the mothers and fathers embracing soldiers. And it can be seen in the Egyptians who linked arms to protect the national museum—a new generation protecting the treasures of antiquity; a human chain connecting a great and ancient civilization to the promise of a new day.

Thank you very much.

White House Statement, February 8, 2011[9]

Vice President Biden spoke today to Egyptian Vice President Omar Soliman to reiterate the United States' support for an orderly transition in Egypt that is prompt, meaningful, peaceful, and legitimate. Vice President Biden urged that the transition produce immediate, irreversible progress that responds to the aspirations of the Egyptian people.

The Vice President reaffirmed that the future of Egypt will be determined by the Egyptian people. The Vice President took note of steps the government of Egypt has pledged to take in response to the opposition and urged the government to take immediate action to follow through on its commitments.

Based on our nation's fundamental belief in the importance of universal rights and representative governments, as well as on consultations with Egypt's opposition and a broad cross section of civil society, Vice President Biden and Vice President Soliman discussed additional steps that the United States supports, including: Restraining the Ministry of Interior's conduct by immediately ending the arrests, harassment, beating, and detention of journalists, and political and civil society activists, and by allowing freedom of assembly and expression;immediately rescinding the emergency law; broadening participation in the national dialogue to include a wide range of opposition members; and inviting the opposition as a partner in jointly developing a roadmap and timetable for transition.

These steps, and a clear policy of no reprisals, are what the broad opposition is calling for and what the government is saying it is prepared to accept. Vice President Biden expressed the belief that the demands of the broad opposition can be met through meaningful negotiations with the government.

Statement by President Obama, February 10, 2011[10]

President Obama. The Egyptian people have been told that there was a transition of authority, but it is not yet clear that this transition is immediate, meaningful or sufficient. Too many Egyptians remain unconvinced that the government is serious about a genuine transition to democracy, and it is the responsibility of the government to speak clearly to the Egyptian people and the world. The Egyptian government must put forward a credible, concrete and unequivocal path toward genuine democracy, and they have not yet seized that opportunity.

As we have said from the beginning of this unrest, the future of Egypt will be determined by the Egyptian people. But the United States has also been clear that we stand for a set of core principles. We believe that the universal rights of the Egyptian people must be respected, and their aspirations must be met. We believe that this transition must immediately demonstrate irreversible political change, and a negotiated path to democracy. To

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that end, we believe that the emergency law should be lifted. We believe that meaningful negotiations with the broad opposition and Egyptian civil society should address the key questions confronting Egypt's future: protecting the fundamental rights of all citizens; revising the Constitution and other laws to demonstrate irreversible change; and jointly developing a clear roadmap to elections that are free and fair.

We therefore urge the Egyptian government to move swiftly to explain the changes that have been made, and to spell out in clear and unambiguous language the step by step process that will lead to democracy and the representative government that the Egyptian people seek. Going forward, it will be essential that the universal rights of the Egyptian people be respected. There must be restraint by all parties. Violence must be forsaken. It is imperative that the government not respond to the aspirations of their people with repression or brutality. The voices of the Egyptian people must be heard.

The Egyptian people have made it clear that there is no going back to the way things were: Egypt has changed, and its future is in the hands of the people. Those who have exercised their right to peaceful assembly represent the greatness of the Egyptian people, and are broadly representative of Egyptian society. We have seen young and old, rich and poor, Muslim and Christian join together, and earn the respect of the world through their nonviolent calls for change. In that effort, young people have been at the forefront, and a new generation has emerged. They have made it clear that Egypt must reflect their hopes, fulfill their highest aspirations, and tap their boundless potential. In these difficult times, I know that the Egyptian people will persevere, and they must know that they will continue to have a friend in the United States of America.

Statement by President Obama, February 11, 2011[11]

President Obama. Good afternoon, everybody. There are very few moments in our lives where we have the privilege to witness history taking place. This is one of those moments. This is one of those times. The people of Egypt have spoken, their voices have been heard, and Egypt will never be the same.

By stepping down, President Mubarak responded to the Egyptian people's hunger for change. But this is not the end of Egypt's transition. It's a beginning. I'm sure there will be difficult days ahead, and many questions remain unanswered. But I am confident that the people of Egypt can find the answers, and do so peacefully, constructively, and in the spirit of unity that has defined these last few weeks. For Egyptians have made it clear that nothing less than genuine democracy will carry the day.

The military has served patriotically and responsibly as a caretaker to the state, and will now have to ensure a transition that is credible in the eyes of the Egyptian people. That means protecting the rights of Egypt's citizens, lifting the emergency law, revising the constitution and other laws to make this change irreversible, and laying out a clear path to elections that are fair and free. Above all, this transition must bring all of Egypt's voices to the table. For the spirit of peaceful protest and perseverance that the Egyptian people have shown can serve as a powerful wind at the back of this change.

The United States will continue to be a friend and partner to Egypt. We stand ready to provide whatever assistance is necessary—and asked for—to pursue a credible transition to a democracy. I'm also confident that the same ingenuity and entrepreneurial spirit that the young people of Egypt have shown in recent days can be harnessed to create new opportunity—jobs and businesses that allow the extraordinary potential of this generation to take flight. And I know that a democratic Egypt can advance its role of responsible leadership not only in the region but around the world.

Egypt has played a pivotal role in human history for over 6,000 years. But over the last few weeks, the wheel of history turned at a blinding pace as the Egyptian people demanded their universal rights.

We saw mothers and fathers carrying their children on their shoulders to show them what true freedom might look like.

We saw a young Egyptian say, "For the first time in my life, I really count. My voice is heard. Even though I'm only one person, this is the way real democracy works."

We saw protesters chant "Selmiyya, selmiyya"—"We are peaceful"—again and again.

We saw a military that would not fire bullets at the people they were sworn to protect.

And we saw doctors and nurses rushing into the streets to care for those who were wounded, volunteers checking protesters to ensure that they were unarmed.

We saw people of faith praying together and chanting—"Muslims, Christians, We are one." And though we know that the strains between faiths still divide too many in this world and no single event will close that chasm immediately, these scenes remind us that we need not be defined by our differences. We can be defined by the common humanity that we share.

And above all, we saw a new generation emerge—a generation that uses their own creativity and talent and technology to call for a government that represented their hopes and not their fears; a government that is responsive to their boundless aspirations. One Egyptian put it simply: Most people have discovered in the last few days…that they are worth something, and this cannot be taken away from them anymore, ever.

This is the power of human dignity, and it can never be denied. Egyptians have inspired us, and they've done so by putting the lie to the idea that justice is best gained through violence. For in Egypt, it was the moral force of nonviolence—not terrorism, not mindless killing—but nonviolence, moral force that bent the arc of history toward justice once more.

And while the sights and sounds that we heard were entirely Egyptian, we can't help but hear the echoes of history—echoes from Germans tearing down a wall, Indonesian students taking to the streets, Gandhi leading his people down the path of justice.

As Martin Luther King said in celebrating the birth of a new nation in Ghana while trying to perfect his own, "There is something in the soul that cries out for freedom." Those were the cries that came from Tahrir Square, and the entire world

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has taken note.

Today belongs to the people of Egypt, and the American people are moved by these scenes in Cairo and across Egypt because of who we are as a people and the kind of world that we want our children to grow up in.

The word Tahrir means liberation. It is a word that speaks to that something in our souls that cries out for freedom. And forevermore it will remind us of the Egyptian people—of what they did, of the things that they stood for, and how they changed their country, and in doing so changed the world.

Thank you.

White House Statement, February 12, 2011[12]

The President made a number of calls to foreign leaders today to continue his consultations with counterparts on the latest developments in Egypt. He spoke to Prime Minister Cameron of the United Kingdom, King Abdullah of Jordan, and Prime Minister Erdogan of Turkey. The President welcomed the historic change that has been made by the Egyptian people, and reaffirmed his admiration for their efforts. He also welcomed the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces' announcement today that it is committed to a democratic civilian transition, and will stand by Egypt's international obligations. The President emphasized his conviction that democracy will bring more—not less—stability to the region. He also stressed the U.S. commitment to provide the support that is necessary and requested by the Egyptian people to pursue a credible and orderly transition to democracy, including by working with international partners to provide financial support. The leaders agreed on the importance of a peaceful transition to a democratic government that is responsive to the aspirations of the Egyptian people, and agreed to work closely together going forward. The President reaffirmed the United States' strong commitment to supporting a more peaceful and prosperous Middle East in close consultation with all our regional partners.

Excerpts of Remarks by Secretary of State Clinton and Egyptian Foreign Minister Al-Araby, March 15, 2011[13]

Secretary Hillary Clinton and Minister Nabil Al-Araby delivered these remarks in Cairo, Egypt

Foreign Minister Al-Araby. I'd like to speak in English first so that I would welcome the Secretary of State. We have had bilateral talks and multilateral talks. We discussed everything in Egypt, the Middle East in general, specifically Libya. We did discuss matters related to Palestine between us also. And I think on our part, we appreciated very much the responses from the Secretary of State. We are appreciative and we hope the very close relation with the United States would continue to flourish in the future.

Secretary Clinton. Well, let me begin by expressing how pleased I am to be back in Cairo and to have this opportunity to meet with the foreign minister and other members of the government to discuss a wide range of issues. But I want to begin by saying very clearly and directly to the people of Egypt that this moment of history belongs to you, that this is your achievement and you broke barriers and overcame obstacles to pursue the dream of democracy, and the United States and President Obama and I will stand with you as you make this journey.

Like so many Americans, we have watched with great admiration and inspiration not only the activities in Tahrir Square but the outpouring of support for a new future where Egyptians take control of their own destiny. And the solidarity that was shown among Egyptians across all lines was very moving to many of us.

This courage and solidarity will serve the people of Egypt well, because the road to democracy, as the United States knows, being the oldest democracy in the world, although nothing like the oldest civilization in the world. We know how hard this path is. And we congratulate you on embarking on what will be a very important next chapter in the storied history of Egypt.

As the foreign minister said, we had a comprehensive discussion on many issues. I came to listen more than talk. I wanted to hear directly about the needs that Egypt has, particularly economically, because we know that political reform must be matched by economic reform, that there must be jobs and rising incomes and opportunities for all.

And we also discussed the current situation in Libya. We are very concerned about the Egyptian citizens who are still in Libya. We have played a part in helping to bring Egyptians home who made it to Tunisia, but we know that there are many, many Egyptians who are still unable to come home.

We also support—and I will have an opportunity to discuss this tomorrow with the prime minister and with the field marshal—the steps that are being taken to lay the groundwork for free and fair elections, and the need for those elections to be meaningful, to be based on a strong foundation that will be stable enough and strong enough to move into the future to hold parliamentary and presidential elections, to get results that will give you leaders that will be able to respond to the aspirations.

I am particularly pleased that the minister and I discussed in great detail with others who were there the economic needs, the need to rebuild a police force that will have the trust of the people. And I applaud the announcement today of the dismantling of the existing state security apparatus and the rebuilding of one that will be responsive to the needs of Egyptians.

We also focused on small and medium-sized enterprises because 99 percent of the jobs in Egypt are in small and medium-sized businesses. And I brought with me the head of our Overseas Private Investment Corporation, Elizabeth Littlefield, to discuss the ways that we could support this effort. And we want to see a very specific commitment by OPIC and by U.S. Export-Import Bank to provide letters of credit, to encourage private sector investments, because the long-term economic growth of Egypt depends not on govern-

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ment jobs but on private sector jobs. So the more foreign direct investment that we can help to encourage and support, we think will be beneficial for Egyptian people.

We've committed $90 million for near-term immediate economic assistance. At my request, we've had legislation introduced in the Senate of the United States by Senator Kerry and Senator McCain to establish an Egypt-American enterprise fund similar to what the United States did for Central and Eastern Europe. And we will closely coordinate with our Egyptian counterparts because we want to be responsive to the needs that you have.

In early January before the protests began, I warned at a conference in Doha that the region's foundations were sinking into the sand. But today, because of the Egyptian people, Egypt is rising. Egypt, Umm al-Dunya, mother of the world, is now giving birth to democracy. Congratulations.

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Q. I just wanted to follow up on Bahrain. And I understand that you spoke with the Saudi foreign minister just a little while ago. And I'm wondering exactly what you could tell us about that conversation. Presumably, you made the same kind of appeals for calm and restraint as you just did here. But what was his response? Are you at all disappointed that the Saudis, the UAE, and others are going in to Bahrain?

Secretary Clinton. Well, I'm not going to characterize their actions. Under their agreements among themselves in the Gulf, they have the right to ask for that assistance, and that's what the Government of Bahrain has done. But I said the very same thing to the foreign minister of Saudi Arabia that I just said now. I said that the security challenges cannot be a substitute for a political resolution. And as they are moving in to respond to the requests by the Government of Bahrain, they, along with everyone else, needs to be promoting the dialogue between the parties. And we have a senior State Department official there, Assistant Secretary Jeff Feltman, who is working with the parties as we speak, because we believe strongly that you can't solve this problem by just trying to bring security to bear; you have to have a political solution.

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1. White House Press Release, January 18, 2011.
2. White House Press Release, January 25, 2011.
3. White House Press Release, January 28, 2011.
4. White House Press Release, January 30, 2011.
5. Dept. of State Press Release, January 30, 2011.
6. Dept. of State Press Release, January 30, 2011.
7. White House Press Release, January 31, 2011.
8. White House Press Release, February 1, 2011.
9. White House Press Release, February 8, 2011.
10. White House Press Release, February 10, 2011.
11. White House Press Release, February 11, 2011.
12. White House Press Release, February 12, 2011.
13. Dept. of State Press Release, March 15, 2011.

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